A SERMON

PREACHED before the

KING

AT

White-Hall,

MAY the Seventh, MDCLXXVI.

BY

JOHN SUDBURY, D.D.
And DEAN of *Durham*,
Chaplain in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

Published by his Majesties special Command.

In the *SAVOY*:
Printed by *T. Newcomb*; and are to be sold by *John Herringman* next to the Fountain-Tavern in the *Strand*. 1676.

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1 Tim. 3. 15.

—*The Pillar and Ground of the Truth.*

THE care of all the Churches, which lay upon St. *Paul*, would neither suffer him to keep a constant residence upon any one of them, nor to leave them as Sheep without a Shepherd to have that care of them in his absence, which he himself had when he was present with them.

And therefore having spent some time at *Ephesus*, he departed from thence into *Macedonia*, leaving the care of that Church to *Timothy*; and wrote this Epistle to him, to let him know how he ought to behave himself in so excellent and worthy a Province as that was, which he had committed to him, as he tells him in this and the former Verse: *These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly. But if I tarry long, that thou mayst know how thou oughtest to behave thy self in the House of*

God, which is the Church of the living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth.

In which words he ſets before him the Dignity of that Church, which he had committed to his care, in three excellent Titles; *The Houſe of God*; *The Church of the living God*; *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth:* Every one of which, is very worthy of a diſtinct and particular Conſideration; but this laſt hath the moſt need of it, becauſe it hath been very much perplex'd with a great deal of work about it, to make it ſerve the pride and ambition of a Church, of which there is not ſo much as any mention throughout the whole Epiſtle. All the Greatneſs of the Church of *Rome*, the Soveraignty of Power and Juriſdiction which it claims over all other Churches, the Infallibility of all her Doctrines, and an Immoveable Station in the Truth, from which it can never fall, are charged upon this Text; but how unreaſonably, we ſhall ſee in the Examination of theſe three Particulars.

I. The *Church*, which is here called *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth.*

II. The *Truth* of which *this* Church is *The Pillar and Ground.*

III. The

III. The importance of theſe words, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth.*

Where it will not be *hard* to make it *clear* and *evident*, that this pretended infallible Oracle of Truth, is very much miſtaken in every one of theſe Particulars; *The Church*; *The Truth*; and, *The Pillar and Ground.*

For the *Church*, of which St. *Paul* ſpeaks in theſe words, was not the Church of *Rome.* The *Truth* of which he ſpeaks, was not the *Truth* of which the *Church* of *Rome* takes upon it to be the *Pillar and Ground.* The *Pillar and Ground* in *their* ſenſe is not the ſenſe of St. *Paul*; and in the ſenſe of St. *Paul*, there was not any *Church* in the World to which this Honour of being *the Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, was not more due than it is to the preſent Church of *Rome.*

And firſt, for the Church, nothing can be more *clear* and *evident*, than that the *Church* of which St. *Paul* ſpeaks in *theſe* words, was not the Church of *Rome*, but the *Church* of *Epheſus:* for *Timothy*, to whom he wrote this Epiſtle, was not the Biſhop of *Rome*, but of *Epheſus.* There St. *Paul* left him, when he departed from thence into *Macedonia*; and he left him

him to *abide there*, and to do the Office of a Biſhop *there*, as he tells him at the *beginning* of this *Epiſtle*. *I beſought thee to abide ſtill at* Epheſus, *when I went into* Macedonia, *that thou mighteſt charge ſome that they teach no other Doctrine.*

This *Church* of *Epheſus* is called the *Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, not as it was the *Local Church* of *Epheſus*, divided from all *other* Churches, as the City of *Epheſus* was divided from all other Cities: Nor as the Viſible Head of them all: But as it was one with them all in the Communion of that one *Catholick* and *Apoſtolick* Church, of which that and all particular Churches were ſo many Parts and Members. Which *one Catholick* and *Apoſtolick* Church, was *One*, not by a corporal aſſembling together in one place, but by an *unanimous profeſſion* of one and the ſame *Catholick* and *Apoſtolick* Faith and Doctrine, and Diſcipline, which was of more Power and Vertue to make them all *one*, than any diſtance of place, or difference of *Laws*, *Languages*, *Cuſtoms*, *Manners*, or any other difference among them, could be to make them *two*. Secondly, *Catholick*, becauſe it was not limited to any Nation, as the *Church* of the *Iſraelites* was confin'd to one Family, which

which was the Houſe of *Jacob*; and all their Sacrifices to one place, which was the Temple at *Jeruſalem*: but extended to all men every where, without any diſtinction of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, *Barbarians*, *Scythians*, bond and free, male and female. Thirdly, *Apoſtolick*, becauſe that one *Catholick* Faith and Doctrine in which they were all join'd together in one, was that which they all had received from the *Apoſtles*, *whoſe ſound was gone out into all the Earth, and their words unto the ends of the World.* Rom. 10. 18.

Now as that one *Catholick* and *Apoſtolick Church* was the *Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, by their viſible profeſſion of that Truth, as we ſhall ſee afterwards: So particular Churches, which made a viſible profeſſion of the ſame *Catholick* and *Apoſtolick Truth*, were one with it, and every one of them might be call'd a *Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, eſpecially ſuch of them as were the moſt *eminent* and *conſpicuous*; and ſuch was the *Church of Epheſus*. For as the Churches of the *Eaſt* were more numerous and conſpicuous when St. *Paul* wrote this *Epiſtle*, than the Churches of the *Weſt*: ſo the Church of *Epheſus* was of great note and eminence among the *Churches* of the *Eaſt*. It was as eminent a *Church* for the profeſſion of the Truth of

Chriſtian

Christian Religion, as the City of *Ephesus* was for Heathenish *Idolatry* and *Superstition*, when it was a Worshipper of the great *Goddess Diana*, and of the Image which fell down from *Jupiter*. The Preaching of the Gospel had such an influence from that City, which was the *Metropolis* of the lesser *Asia*, that *all they which dwelt in* Asia *heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks*. The Men of Learning, who had busied their Wits, and spent much of their time in the study of Curious Arts, were so taken with it, as not only to renounce all further study of those Curious Arts; but to shew their resolution never to return to that Study again, *they brought their Books together and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver: so mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed.* And the Crafts-men of the City, who got their Wealth by making Silver Shrines for *Diana*, were so alarm'd at the success of it, as to perceive that *the Temple of the great Goddess* Diana *would be despis'd, and her Magnificence destroyed, whom all* Asia *and the World worshipped*. And which troubled them more, their Trade was in great danger to be lost; for that was the first Argument which *Demetrius* us'd to raise them

Act. 19. 10.

Act. 19. 19, 20.

up

up into an uproar, Verſ. 25. *Sirs, ye know that by this Craft we have our Wealth.*

The Church of *Epheſus* had this further Honour, not only to be one of the *Seven Churches* which were preſented to St. *John*, in the Viſion of Seven Golden Candleſticks, and Chriſt in the midſt of them, commanding him to write ſo many *Epiſtles* to them, which he himſelf dictated to him; but to be the *firſt of them*; and the Character which he gives of that Church, is ſuch as might well become a *Church* which was a *Pillar and Ground of the Truth*: *I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canſt not bear them which are evil: And thou haſt tryed them which ſay they are Apoſtles, and are not, and haſt found them lyars; and haſt born, and haſt patience, and for my Names ſake haſt laboured, and haſt not fainted.* Revel. 1. 11. Revel. 2. 2, 3.

Now if the Church of *Epheſus*, which had all this Honour, had aſpir'd to a Supremacy over *all other Churches*, it might have made a fairer Title to it by St. *Paul*, than that which the *Church of Rome* hath made by St. *Peter*. For St. *Paul* was *ſeparated to his Office from his Mothers Womb*. He was called to it in a ſingular and extraordinary manner, by *Chriſt* appearing Gal. 1. 15.

Acts 9. 3. pearing to him in a Viſion *from Heaven.* He
Verſ. 15. was honour'd by him with this Character, *He is a choſen Veſſel unto me, to bear my Name before the Gentiles and Kings, and the Children*
2 Cor. 11. 5. *of Iſrael. He was not a whit behind the very*
1 Cor. 15. 10 *chief Apoſtles. He laboured more abundantly*
2 Cor. 11. 28. *than they all. The care of all the Churches lay*
Rom. 15. 20. *upon him.* He *ſtrived to preach the Goſpel not where Chriſt was named, leſt he ſhould build upon another mans foundation. He conferred not*
Gal. 1. 16, 17 *with fleſh and blood, neither went he up to* Jeruſalem *to them that were Apoſtles before him.*
Gal. 2. 6. *They who ſeem'd to be ſomewhat in conference added nothing to him.* He was ſo far from
Verſ. 11. learning any thing of St. *Peter*, and from looking upon him as his Superiour, that *he withſtood him to the face*; and told him plainly, that he, and others whom he had miſled,
Verſ. 14. *walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Goſpel.* And St. *Peter* was ſo far from rebuking him for his inſolence, as to make an honourable
2 Pet. 3. 15. mention of him: *Our beloved Brother* Paul, *according to the Wiſdom given to him.*

St. *Paul*, who was thus highly honour'd, had been Preaching the Goſpel to the *Epheſi-*
Acts 20. 31. *ans* for the ſpace of *three years:* But there is not ſo much as any expreſs mention in the Scrip-

Scripture that ever St. *Peter* was at *Rome*; and we may ſee they are hard put to prove it, when they cannot alledge any one Text for it but that, *The Church which is at* Babylon *elect together with you, ſaluteth you.* 1 Pet. 5. 13.

It was likewiſe a ſingular care which St. *Paul* had of the Church of *Epheſus*, that in his abſence he commended the care of it to *Timothy*, a perſon indear'd to him by many Names; His *own Son in the Faith*; His *beloved Son*; His *Brother*; His *Work-fellow*: and wrote two Epiſtles to him, to let him know how he ought to behave himſelf in ſo excellent and worthy a Province as that which he calleth *The Houſe of God, the Church of the living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth.* Whereas St. *Peter* never wrote any one Epiſtle to the *Romans*, nor do we read of any one whom he left to take care of that Church in his abſence, though he was ſo much abſent that it is much doubted whether he were ever there. 1 Tim. 1. 1. 2 Tim. 1. 1. Col. 1. 1. Rom. 16. 21.

For all that the ancient Fathers have written of his being Biſhop of *Antioch* ſeven years, and after that Biſhop of *Rome* twenty and five years, and after that crucified under *Nero*, is upon the Teſtimony of *Euſebius*, of whom *Bellarmine* ſaith that he was deceiv'd in ſome things, and

we are very well assur'd that he was deceived in this: for three years after St. *Paul*'s Conversion, he went up, not to *Rome*, but *to Jerusalem*, to
Gal 1. 18. see *Peter*, and there he found him, *and abode*
Gal. 2. 1, 9. *with him fifteen days.* Then *fourteen years after he went up again to Jerusalem*; and there he found him. He was present at the Council at *Jerusalem*, as we read *Act.* 15. which was eighteen years after Christ: And in the former Chapters of the *Acts of the Apostles*, we find him there, or thereabouts, a great way from *Rome.* After that he preach'd the Gospel to those of *Pontus*, *Asia*, *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, and *Bithynia.* And if after all this time he sate Bishop of *Antioch* seven years, and after that five and twenty years Bishop of *Rome*, he must outlive *Nero* more years than *Nero* Reigned, and therefore he could not be crucified under him.

But as St. *Paul*, who knew very well that he
2 Cor. 11. 5. *was not a whit behind the very chief Apostles*, did never offer to put himself before and above them all; and among the Apostles there were some who in regard of their Personal Excellencies are called *Chief and Pillars*, yet without any Jurisdiction over the rest: so among Churches, though the Churches of the *East* were more numerous, and of greater note than those

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of the *West*, they never requir'd any subjection from them; and among the *Eastern* Churches, though the Church of *Ephesus* was of great note and eminence, it never assumed any Soveraignty over the other Churches. There is no ground in Scripture, nor in the Catholick and Apostolick Church, that will afford any standing for such a Pillar, as that of a Local Church, which is to all other Churches as the *Head* in a Body to all the Members of that Body, as a *Foundation* in a Building to all the Building that stands upon it, as a *Root* in a Tree to all the Branches: For though the *Church* of *Rome* arrogates to it self all these Titles, together with that of the *Catholick* and *Apostolick Church*, this is so far from being *Catholick* and *Apostolick Truth*, that it is neither *Catholick*, nor *Apostolick*, nor *Truth*.

1. It is not Catholick: for though the City of *Rome* had that Dominion over the Kings of the Earth, for which it was called *Caput Orbis*, the Head of the World; the Church of *Rome* did never claim any such Headship over all other Churches for above three hundred years after St. *Paul* wrote this Epistle: and was so far from denying her Communion to all other Churches, but those which would accept it upon such terms

terms as those, which *Nahash* the *Ammonite* propos'd to the men of *Jabesh-Gilead*; *On this condition will I make a Covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes.* Or from saying to them as the Bramble in the Parable of *Jotham* said unto the Trees; *If in truth ye anoint me King over you, then come, and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the Bramble, and devour the Cedars of* Lebanon. That in the sixth Canon of the Council of *Nice*, which in the *Arabick* Canons is the eighth, the Bishop of *Rome* is proposed as an example to the Bishop of *Alexandria* to contain himself within his own limits.

1 Sam. 11. 2.

Judg. 9. 15.

2. It is not Apostolick; for the Apostles knew nothing of any *Superiority* and *Subjection* among themselves, or among the *Churches* which were founded by them. They knew no other Head of the Church, but Him, *who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.* They knew no other Foundation, but that of *Apostles and Prophets*; *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.* And in that Foundation all the Apostles were as much of the Foundation as any one of them, and therefore are called *Twelve Foundations*, Revel. 21. 14.

Col. 1. 18.

Ephes. 2. 20.

The

The Church of *Jeruſalem* was in ſome ſenſe the Root of all Churches; St. *Paul* calleth it ſo, *Rom.* 11. 17. But it never claimed any Superiority over all other Churches upon that account. But as for the Church of *Rome*, he ſaith plainly in the ſame Verſe, that it was not the Root, but a Branch of a Wild-Olive graffed in among other Branches, and with them partook of the Root and Fatneſs of the Olive-Tree. And as if he had foreſeen how ready that Church would be to boaſt it ſelf againſt other Churches, he gives them an Admonition againſt it, in the next Verſe: *Boaſt not againſt the Branches: but if thou boaſt, thou beareſt not the Root, but the Root thee.* And argues the matter with them in the next Verſe: *Thou wilt ſay then, the Branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in. Well, becauſe of Unbelief they were broken off, and thou ſtandeſt by Faith: be not high-minded, but fear; for if God ſpared not the Natural Branches, take heed leſt he alſo ſpare not thee.* And ſets before them the example of Gods Severity againſt the Natural Branches, as a warning to them not to be high-minded, but fear, at the next Verſe: *Behold therefore the Goodneſs and Severity of God: on them which fell, Severity; but towards thee, Good-*

Goodneſs, if thou continue in his Goodneſs, otherwiſe thou alſo ſhalt be cut off.

3. As it is not *Catholick* nor *Apoſtolick*, ſo it is ſo far from *Truth*, that there never was a more Fundamental Errour, than that of a Local Church, which is ſuch a *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, that it cannot err. But if in the Epiſtle to the *Romans* there is no mention of ſuch a *Pillar and Ground of Truth*; and in this Epiſtle to *Timothy*, where theſe words are found, there is not any mention of the Church of *Rome*, I need not ſay any more to ſhew how much they are out in the firſt Particular, which is the *Church*. Let us proceed to the ſecond Particular, which is the *Truth*; and ſee if they be not as much out in the *Truth*, as they are in the *Church*.

1. The *Truth* of which the Church is the *Pillar and Ground*, is not *all* Truth: For there are *many* Truths for which the Church is *not* concern'd; they may ſtand or fall according to the ſtrength or weakneſs of thoſe Arguments by which they are ſupported, or with which they are aſſaulted, without any peril or prejudice to the *Church*. God who would have all men to be ſaved, and to come to the knowledge of the Truth, hath ſet up a *Church* to lead men

to

to the knowledge of all that *Truth* which is neceſſary for them, that they may be ſaved: but as for many other Truths, which are profeſs'd and taught in Schools and Univerſities; as all men are not born to be bred up in them, ſo the knowledge of them is not ſo neceſſary to them, but that they may be ſaved without it. When Chriſt promis'd his Diſciples that he would ſend them *the Spirit of Truth, to guide them into all Truth*, He ſpake of that Truth which was neceſſary for them to know, for the diſcharging of that Office and Miniſtry which he had committed to them, not all other Truth. And therefore when the *Manichees* gloried in him who was the Patriarch of their Sect, that he was a man full of the Holy Ghoſt, and led into all Truth, for that he could diſcourſe of Truths in Aſtronomy, and other Mathematical Sciences; St. *Auſtin* anſwer'd them very well, That this was no Argument to prove that he was full of the Holy Ghoſt: for the Holy Ghoſt was not given to lead men into ſuch Truths; for he was not given to make Mathematicians, but Chriſtians. And though it is true that the *Infallible Chair* doth not in theſe days meddle with Truths of this nature, there was a time when it did; but ſo unluckily, as to condemn Joh. 16. 13.

one *Virgilius* for holding that there were *Antipodes*, and that the Earth is round, and the Sun, and Moon, and Stars, move about it in the other Hemiſphere, as they do in this; which is a demonſtrable Truth.

But to let this paſs, as it is not all Truth, ſo neither is it all Theological Truth, or Truth in Divinity: for Divinity is a Science, in which there are ſome Truths which dwell in that Light which is ſo inacceſſible, that the moſt learned men are not aſham'd to confeſs that ſuch knowledge is too wonderful for them, and that they cannot attain unto it. And there be many other Truths about which learned men may differ in opinion, and diſpute with ſo much probability on either ſide, that though the Truth cannot be with both of them, becauſe what the one affirms, the other denieth; yet they who are in the Errour may be perſwaded that the Truth is with them, and their Errour ſhall not prejudice their Salvation, unleſs they ſuffer themſelves to be led into it by ſome prejudice or paſſion, or be ſo obſtinate in it as to ſhew that they ſeek not Truth, but Victory; and would rather perſiſt in an Errour, than by ſuffering themſelves to be led out of it, ſeem to acknowledge that they were in an Errour. The Scriptures, which

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are able to make all men wiſe unto Salvation, are not ſo clear and evident in all things, but that we may ſay of other Books of Scripture, as St. *Peter* ſaith of the Epiſtles of St. *Paul*, *There are ſome things in them hard to be underſtood:* But the more hard they are to be underſtood, the leſs neceſſary they are to be known. God, who hath made the Fruits of the Earth, which are neceſſary for the food and ſuſtenance of men, to grow upon the face of it, where every eye may ſee them, and every hand may gather them; but hid the Mines of Gold and Silver, which ſerve for Riches and Ornament, in the Bowels of the Earth, where they cannot be found but with much ſeeking, nor be wrought out, and purged from that Droſs with which they are mixt, but with great labour, hath likewiſe made all that Truth which is neceſſary to feed the Souls of men to Eternal Life, ſo eaſie to be found, that we may ſay of that, as the *Wiſe-man* ſaith of Wiſdom, *Wiſdom is eaſily ſeen of them that love her, and found of ſuch as ſeek her.* Wiſd. 6. 12. But there be many other Truths which ſerve to inrich and adorn the Soul, which he hath reſerv'd to exerciſe and reward the labour and ſtudy of them that *ſeek for them as for Silver, and as for hidden Treaſures.* If there

were an Infallible Oracle to determine all Truths, the easiness of coming to the knowledge of them would much abate and lessen the value and esteem of them: but when the difficulty of finding them excites desire, and desire stirs up labour and study, and labour and study find that Truth which could not be found without it, it is the more joyfully embrac'd, and more stedfastly retain'd.

But, Thirdly, The Truth of which the *Church* is the *Pillar* and *Ground*, is *that Truth* which is no where to be found but in the *Church*; but is so manifest in the profession of the Church, that they who cannot find it any where else, may find it there. For as in all Sciences there are some *Truths* which are *proper* and *peculiar* to them, as Truths in Logick, Truths in Natural and Moral Philosophy, Truths in all Mathematical Sciences: so there are some Truths in Divinity which are proper and peculiar to it, which as they could never have been known but by Divine Revelation, so they have been made known to the *Apostles* by the Spirit of Truth, which was given to them to guide them into all Truth, and by the *Apostles* to the *Church*. Such is that which St. *Paul* calleth, *The Truth of the Gospel*, Col. 1. 5. *The Truth of Christ*,

2 Cor.

2 Cor. 11. 10. *The Truth of God*, Rom. 15. 8. And many times it is called *Truth*, and *the Truth*, without any note of difference from all other *Truth*. *Truth*, in oppoſition to the Religion of the *Heathen* as *Truth*, is oppos'd to Falſhood and Lyes: *Truth*, in oppoſition to the Religion of the *Jews* as Truth, is oppos'd to Figures and Shadows: *Truth*, in oppoſition to all *other* Truth, not as contrary to it; for one Truth cannot be contrary to another, but in a ſuperlative ſenſe the moſt excellent and moſt incomparable Truth. For though all *Truth* is *Truth*, yet as St. *Paul* ſaith of the Law and the Goſpel compar'd together, *Even that which was made glorious had no glory by reaſon of the glory that excelleth:* So we may ſay of Truths in Philoſophy and all Sciences, compar'd with the Truth of the Goſpel, That which is Truth is not Truth in compariſon of the Truth that excelleth. Such is the Truth of which the Apoſtle ſpeaks in the next words to theſe of the Text, which ſome have joyn'd together, expounding theſe words by them: *Without controverſie great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs: God was manifeſt in the Fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit, ſeen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the World, received in Glory.* 2 Cor. 3. 10.

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The *Truth* which he calleth the *Truth which is after Godlineſs in hope of Eternal Life, which God that cannot lye promiſed before the World began, but hath in due time manifeſted his Word through Preaching.* The *Truth* by which we are begotten again, *Jam.* 1. 18. *Of his own Will begat he us again by the Word of Truth.* The *Truth* that maketh us Free-men, *Joh.* 8. 32. *Ye ſhall know the Truth, and the Truth ſhall make you free.* The ſanctifying *Truth*, *Joh.* 17. 17. *Sanctifie them with thy Truth, thy Word is Truth.* The ſaving *Truth*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 4. *God would have all men to be ſaved, and to come to the knowledge of the Truth.* And this is the *Truth* of which the Church is the *Pillar and Ground* in the ſenſe of St. *Paul.* Now what ſenſe that is, follows in my third and laſt Particular, which is the importance of theſe words, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth.*

Here are two words, the *Pillar* and *Ground*, but they are very well joyn'd together, for they ſignifie two things which are joyn'd together in a Pillar that ſtandeth firm and ſtedfaſt. The former word ſignifieth that which we call the *Body* of the Pillar; the latter word ſignifieth the *Baſis*, or *Foundation*, or *Foot* of the Pillar: both together ſignifie a Pillar ſtanding upon a Baſis

Baſis or Foundation. But the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, is a *Metaphorical* Expreſſion, and *Metaphors* are apt to beget *Miſtakes:* for in every *Metaphor* there is ſomething which is *like*, and ſomething which is *not like*; and as when the Metaphor is taken from ſomething wherein there is a *likeneſs*, the Metaphorical Expreſſion makes the ſenſe more *elegant* and clear; but when it is *ſtretched* to ſomething wherein there is *no likeneſs*, in ſtead of making the ſenſe *more clear*, it makes *non-ſenſe*. As in this Metaphor of *the Pillar and Ground of Truth:* A Pillar, or rather *many* Pillars, upon which a Houſe or Church is built, (as the Temple of *Jeruſalem* was built upon many *Pillars*, and ſo was the Temple of *Diana* at *Epheſus*) the Pillars are as the *Foundation* upon which the Houſe or *Church* is built, as the *Foot* of the Pillar is to the Pillar which ſtands upon it. But in this ſenſe neither the *Church of Epheſus*, nor the *Church of Rome*, nor any *National Church*, nor the whole *Catholick* and *Apoſtolick Church*, could be well and truly called *The Pillar and Ground of Truth*; becauſe the *Truth* is not built upon the *Church*, but the *Church* upon the *Truth*. And as there could never have been a *True Church*, if the *Truth of the Church* had not been

been *before* the *Church:* ſo if the *Truth* be removed from the *Church*, it is no longer a True Church. There is no Power or Authority in *any Church*, to make any thing a *Truth* which was not a *Truth before*. The Apoſtles delivered the *whole* Faith to the Church; and if all the Churches in the World ſhould joyn together, they cannot make *one new* Article of Faith: All that they can do, is to *deliver* what they have *receiv'd* from them who have delivered what *they alſo received*, till we come at laſt to the *Apoſtles*, who delivered what *they* alſo receiv'd from the *Spirit of Truth*, by which they were led into all that *Truth*, which could not otherwiſe be made known to them, and aſſiſted in delivering thoſe *Truths* which were by other *infallible* proofs made known to them.

But beſide thoſe many Pillars upon which Houſes and Churches were built, there were *ſingle* Pillars erected by the *Heathen*, to ſuch purpoſes, as do ſerve very well to expreſs the ſenſe of *this* Metaphor, which the Apoſtle here uſeth by way of *alluſion* to them.

As firſt, There were Pillars which they rear'd up on high with Images of their *Gods and Goddeſſes* upon them, ſitting or ſtanding, or in ſome other poſture to attract the *eyes* of men to look

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up to them with that *Reſpect* and *Veneration* which is due to *Divine* things. Of ſuch Pillars we read *Lev.* 26. 1. *Ye ſhall make you no Idols, nor Graven Image, neither rear you up a ſtanding Image or Pillar*, as it is in the *Margin*. Now as St. *Paul* ſaith of the *Heathen*, that they *changed the Truth of God into a Lye*; and the Prophet *Habakkuk* calleth an Idol a *Teacher of Lyes*: So we may ſay of thoſe Pillars of Idols, they were Pillars of *Lyes*. And in alluſion to them the *Church*, which ſets up the *true* Worſhip of the *true* God, above all the *falſe* Worſhip of all *falſe* gods, to draw the eyes of all men to look up to it with that *Veneration* which is due to it, may be called the Pillar and Ground of Truth, *Excelſa Columna*, according to that which the Prophet *Iſaiah* foretold of it in another Metaphor, *Iſai.* 2. 2. *It ſhall come to paſs in the laſt days, that the Mountain of the Lords Houſe ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the top of the Mountains, and ſhall be exalted above the Hills; and all Nations ſhall flow unto it.* But in this ſenſe the Church of *Rome* is more like to thoſe *Pillars* of the *Heathen*, than any other Chriſtian Church. For though it doth not ſet up thoſe *Idols* and *Images* of the *Heathen* to be worſhipped; it ſets up *Images* and *Creatures* to be worſhipped, which Rom. 1. 25. Hab. 2. 18.

are either *made* Idols, or are in ſo much *danger* to be made *Idols*, that by the Confeſſion of *Bellarmine*, they that worſhip God in an Image, or in a Creature, expoſe themſelves to great peril, and are forced to uſe the moſt ſubtil diſtinctions, which *learned* men do not underſtand, much leſs the *ignorant and unlearned*.

Secondly, We read of many *Pillars* erected by the *Heathen*, with *Inſcriptions* upon them; Inſcriptions of *Hiſtorical* Narrations, of which it may be ſome were *true*, and ſome were *fabulous*; and many other Inſcriptions of *Laws*, *Leagues*, *Covenants*, *Precepts*, *Decrees*, *Myſteries*, *&c.* in which ſenſe the Metaphor of a Pillar is uſed, *Revel.* 3. 12. *Him that overcometh will I make a Pillar in the Temple of my God— and I will write upon him the Name of my God, and the Name of the City of my God, which is the New Jeruſalem which cometh down out of Heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new Name.* In this ſenſe the *Catholick* and *Apoſtolick Church* which expoſeth the Scriptures, which *Irenæus* calleth the *Pillar* and *Ground* of the Faith of the Church, and in which are written the *Oracles of God*, his *Laws*, *Covenants*, *Decrees*, *Myſteries* of his Will, Hiſtories of his *Providence*, and many other *Di-*

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vine Truths, to be as legible as *Inſcriptions* upon a Pillar; and every particular Church, which makes a viſible profeſſion of all that Truth which it hath receiv'd from the *Apoſtles*, and the whole *Catholick* and *Apoſtolick* Church, ſo far forth as it is one with that *Catholick* and *Apoſtolick* Church, is a Pillar and Ground of the Truth, *Inſcripta Columna*, a Pillar bearing thoſe *Inſcriptions* upon it, in ſuch Characters as make them legible to all men. But in this ſenſe the Church of *Rome* cannot ſo well be called a *Pillar* and *Ground* of the Truth, as other Churches.

1. Becauſe other Churches, *Hebrew*, *Greek*, *Perſian*, *Syrian*, *Arabian*, *Ethiopian*, have expos'd the Scriptures to be read in their Vulgar Tongue: But the *Church of Rome* doth not expoſe the Scriptures to be read but in a Language which the greateſt part of them that are concern'd to know the Truths which are reveal'd in them, do not underſtand; by which means they have kept the people in ſo *great* ignorance of the *Scriptures*, that at the beginning of the Reformation many of them knew ſo little of the *New Teſtament*, as to believe that it was a Book which had been written by *Luther*.

2. Becauſe they ſet up unwritten Traditions, of which it may be ſome are true, and

ſome are fabulous, and make them all of equal Authority with the *Scriptures*.

3. Becauſe they make the Authority of the Scriptures ſo dependant upon their *own* Authority, that without it, they are of no more Authority than *Eſops Fables*, as ſome of them have ſaid, and others of them *commend* the ſaying.

4. Becauſe though they hold the Foundation, they have built upon that Foundation ſuch
1 Cor. 3. 12. things as St. *Paul* calleth *Wood*, *Hay* and *Stubble*, and would make the World believe that they are *Gold*, *Silver*, *Precious Stones*; which is not the part of a Pillar and Ground of Truth.

But, Thirdly, The *Pillar* and *Ground* of Truth as it is in the Text, that is a Pillar ſet upon a Baſis or Foundation, which keeps it *firm* and *ſtedfaſt*, is a very good expreſſion of ſuch a profeſſion of the *Truth* as is without *wavering*. In which ſenſe St. *Baſil* calleth *Abraham* a *Pillar* of Faith, becauſe when he was tempted with a great temptation, *He ſtag-*
Rom. 4. 20. *gered not through Unbelief, but was ſtrong in the Faith.* And in an Epiſtle written by the Churches of *Vienna* and *Lyons*, mentioned by *Euſebius*; the *Martyrs*, who ſuffer'd a great Perſecution for their Faith, and were not *ſha-*

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ken in it, are called *Pillars*; and *Atalus*, one of great note among them, is called a *Pillar and Ground of the Church*. And in this ſenſe the *Catholick and Apoſtolick Church may well be called the Pillar and Ground of the Truth*; *Immota Columna*, a Pillar that ſtood unmoved upon that Ground on which it was ſet. For though ſome Local Churches, which were but as ſo many *Candleſticks*, though they were of *Gold*, have been removed; the *Catholick* and *Apoſtolick* Church was ſo well ſetled upon a *ſure* and *ſtrong* Foundation, that all the means which have been uſed to *overthrow* it, have ſerved to *eſtabliſh* it.

Great Endeavours were us'd at firſt to prevent the ſetting up of this *Pillar* upon the *Ground* of it, by them whom the Scripture calleth the *Builders*: but the Deſtruction which they thought to bring upon the *Pillar* and the *Ground*, fell upon *themſelves*; and the Deſtruction which fell upon themſelves, ſerv'd very much to the *Edification* of that *Pillar* and *Ground* of *Truth*, which they ſought to deſtroy.

No ſooner was the *Pillar* ſet up upon the *Ground*, but great Force and Violence was uſed to throw it down. The *Kings* of the Earth were aſſembled, and the *Princes* took counſel

counſel together againſt it, as the *Children of* Edom *in the day of* Jeruſalem, *Down with it, down with it even to the ground.* But all the Force and Violence which they uſed to overthrow it, ſerv'd to let them ſee that it was ſo well ſetled upon a *ſure* and *ſtrong* Foundation, that it could not be *overthrown.* And as all the *Pillars* of *Heatheniſh Idolatry* and *Superſtition*, which were ſo many *Pillars of Lyes*, fell before it like *Dagon* before the *Ark of God*; ſo that we may ſay of them as the Angel ſaid of *Babylon*, *Babylon is faln, is faln*, So we may ſay of this *Pillar* and *Ground* of *Truth*, as Chriſt ſaith of the Houſe built upon a Rock, *The Rain deſcended, and the Floods came, and the Winds blew, and beat upon it, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a Rock.*

Revel. 18. 2.

Matth. 7. 25.

There have been from the beginning ſuch as St. *Peter* calls *Falſe Prophets, who have privily brought in damnable Hereſies, denying the Lord that bought them, and have brought upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction.* But that ſwift deſtruction which they have brought upon *themſelves*, hath ſerved to the *Edification* of the *Church* in that *Truth* which they ſought to *deſtroy.*

2 Pet. 2. 1.

But this *Pillar and Ground of Truth* was never in ſo much danger to be thrown *down* by all

all the force and violence which *Jews* and *Heathens* have rais'd against it; nor to be *undermined* by all the *Heresies* which *False Prophets* and *False Apostles* have devised, as the *Truth* of it hath been to be *perverted* by *that* Church, which hath endeavoured *defendendo concutere*, to shake this Pillar and Ground by seeming to defend it. For though it hath not removed the Pillar from the *Ground*, but is so far *Catholick* and *Apostolick*, as to hold the Foundation of which St. *Paul* saith, *Other Foundation can no man lay, save that which is laid, Jesus Christ*; they have done great *wrong* to the Truth, by *defacing* the *ancient Inscriptions* which were first written upon this Pillar, with such *Alterations* and *Additions* as they have made. But all these *Alterations* and *Additions* have served to raise up many *learned* men, and not a few of them of this *Church of England*, to revive those *ancient* Inscriptions, and make many Truths, which are good and profitable, to be known more *legible* than they were before. 1 Cor.3.11.

St. *Paul* speaks of a time *that should come, when men would not endure sound Doctrine, but according to their own lusts they would heap up to themselves Teachers, having itching ears.* But as he saith in another place, *There must be Here-* 2 Tim.4.3. 1 Cor.11.19.

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ſies, that they which are approved may be made manifeſt: So we may ſay of theſe *itching ears*, and the confuſed multitude of *Teachers*, which they have heaped to *themſelves*, They have ſerv'd to make them that are *approved* for *holding faſt the form of ſound words*, and Doctrine, which they have received from the *Apoſtles*, and *Apoſtolick Church*, the more *manifeſt*.

Some Profane Wits have pleas'd themſelves in making *Paſquins*, and clapping them upon this Pillar; but they could never make them ſtick ſo faſt, but that they have fain to the ground, and been trodden under feet of men. But the Pillar and Ground of Truth can never fall: The Ground on which it ſtands is the Matth. 16. 18 *Rock, againſt which the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail:* The *Faith* by which it ſtands is the Heb. 12. 28. Belief of a *Kingdom which cannot be moved:* The Doctrine which is built upon this Faith is Tit. 1. 9. *Sound Doctrine*; and as there have been, ſo there will be ſo many holding the profeſſion of this Faith and Doctrine *without wavering*, as will keep up this *Pillar* and *Ground* of Truth ſo long as the Pillars of Heaven and Earth ſhall ſtand; and till He who is *the Author and Finiſher of our Faith*, bring us to the end of our Faith, which is the Salvation of our Souls.

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